The time has not come to close any of the avenues of thought into the mysteries surrounding us.
—W. MACNEILE DIXON

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"THE KARMA OF NATIONS"

THIS expression, for students of *The Secret Doctrine,* at once calls to mind a passage towards the end of the first volume of Madame Blavatsky's major work, in the section entitled "Cyclic Evolution and Karma." There, in the discussion of the broad pattern of evolution, it is said:

> [There] are the great Racial Cycles which affect equally all the nations and tribes in that special Race; but there are minor and national as well as tribal cycles within those, which run independently of each other. They are called in the Eastern esotericism the *Karmic* cycles.

If one could untangle the skeins of historical causation with an eye to the bearing of these *"Karmic"* cycles, the mysteries of national Karma would doubtless become clear. But as the terrible years of the present segment of the hundred-year cycle rush by, questions of "national" Karma begin to seem less and less important. The "Karma of the Nations," in other words, bids fair to become lost in the Karma of Mankind.

There is a sense in which we are old and tired, as citizens or nationals of a particular country or state. We seem to be on the verge of the end of the world as we know it, and of all sad things about the present the saddest is our lack of vision concerning the world as it must become.

"The pupil," it is said in *The Voice of the Silence,* "must regain the child-state he has lost." It now seems that the impending compulsions of national Karma are conspiring to take all meaning away from the cycles of national destiny—to *end,* that is, the lines of separative causation from which, in large part, the nations have obtained

their very identity. And so it is that, under the pressures of an anxiety that has no foreseeable end in terms of national Karma, the men of our world are having to consider the possibility of becoming inexperienced little children in a world where the iron links of national identity have been broken upon the anvil of common karmic events.

A man of very nearly two centuries ago, one who had a strong hand in the shaping of American destiny, announced to his contemporaries: "The world is my country; my religion is to do good." This was, then, in some measure, the spirit in which the American Republic was brought forth. And that motive, in however tenuous a thread, has been carried forward in American life from that day to this. Thomas Paine, practical man and patriot, labored for the birth of a new nation in the eighteenth century; but his dream was rather of the birth of a new mankind, and the nation was but a means to this high end. The proposition that invites acceptance is that Paine's vision is now a prospect that ought to be embraced by all.

It is not that the intimate bonds of social and cultural Karma will suddenly dissolve. Those close relationships, which have been turned too often and too extensively to raising barriers and ramparts, can also generate communities of moral strength. Fraternities of men do not lose their principle of alliance by committing their common purposes to a wider fellowship of the family of man.

The means, it must be confessed, remain obscure, and the obstacles many. What is certain is only the fact that a limited national destiny has already become a destiny which courts destruction and an end to ideative causation of any sort. And it is true that we are young and shy, like babes in a dark wood, when it comes to entering upon a life from which the familiar refuges and securities of a national existence have been taken away. All we can do is remember that we have been babes and children before, and have survived other confusing circumstances.

The times are surely a test of the potentialities of brotherhood. We have an instruction from the Karma of the nations, to the effect that the age of the nation-state is coming to an end, and that men must begin to find in one another, simply as human beings, the sources of confidence and hope.

PROEM

X

CREATION as an "idea"—in its transcendent sense—pertains to realms beyond the reach of mind as it is generally understood. Creation as a "word" *stimulates* the human mind to endless wonder and meaningful search—opening avenues of thought to wider vistas of perception, inviting the imagination to flights beyond mere fancy, or, it may be, engaging the true function of the creative power that lies at the root of the image-making faculty. Creation as an "act" is sheer *magic*—in the truly occult sense of the term. (Magic, *Magia,* means the "Great Life," or divine life *in spirit*. The root is *magh* as seen in the Sanskrit *Mahat;* Zend, *Maz;* Greek, *Megas,* and Latin, *Magnus*.)

The greatest aid—or obstacle—to comprehension of "Creation" lies in the inner attitude, which governs the approach to the idea. Asking *why* is there a Universe may lead to realization of the interdependence of all that constitutes the objective world, and therefore to reflection on the *moral* overtones inevitably implied. If one asks *how* the Universe arose or *what* brought it into being, he may have the experience of discovering a universal *unfolding process,* evident on every hand, that invites the searching mind to become naturalist and philosopher. "There is a constant becoming; there has been no beginning, there can be no ending," said the naturalist, John Burroughs. And a similar perception is found in the words of Bernard Shaw: "Life is a constant becoming; all stages lead to the beginning of others." If, however, one should ask *who* created the Universe, the question implies a "Creator." This is the simplest question, the most direct question, and likewise the final question—it closes the mind.

The dictionary definition of "creation" implies the same finality. The word's primary meaning is, "specifically, the act of causing to exist, or fact of being brought into existence, by divine power; especially, the act of bringing this world into existence out of nothing." *The Secret Doctrine,* by way of comparison and contrast, depicts the universal scope and character of Creation.

Page one of Proem presents, in the archaic symbolism of the Point within the Circle, all the elements incident to the drama of Creation. This, as it were, is the "prologue":

> The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns. Its circumference—a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind—indicates the abstract, even incognisable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one. It is on this plane that the Manvantaric manifestations begin; for it is in this SOUL that slumbers, during the Pralaya, the Divine Thought, wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony.

A footnote reminds the reader that "Divine Thought," like "Universal Mind," must not be regarded as even vaguely shadowing forth an intellectual process akin to that exhibited by man. That is, "Divine Thought" does not imply the idea of a "Divine Thinker."

What key to the *magic* of Creation does this quotation from Proem provide? The incognizable PRESENCE and the "Universal Soul" *are one*. In that Soul is the "Divine Thought." And within the Divine Thought is the "plan" of the Universe-to-be. A plan implies "intelligence" to sketch and guide the unfoldment of its possibilities. In the symbolism of Point, Plane, and Circumference of the abstract Circle are three aspects of the Indissoluble Unity—come Manvantara or Pralaya. *Within* the ALL-containing Reality or Principle is the "plan" and Mind is the "active aspect." As said in *The Ocean of Theosophy,* by Wm. Q. Judge:

> Mind is the intelligent part of the Cosmos, and in the collection of seven differentiations [above roughly sketched], Mind is that in which the plan of the Cosmos is fixed or contained. This plan is brought over from a prior period of manifestation which added to its ever-increasing perfectness, and no limit can be set to its evolutionary possibilities in perfectness. Because there was never any beginning to the periodical manifestations of the Absolute, there never will be any end, but forever the going forth and withdrawing into the Unknown will go on. (p. 15.)

What marks the *moment* in Time when "Creation" begins—the dividing line between Manvantara and Pralaya—the beginning of the Cosmic *Day?* According to the Stanzas of the *Book of Dzyan*:

> I. The eternal parent wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities.

II. . . . . Where were the builders, the luminous sons of manvantaric dawn?

The hour had not yet struck . . .

III. . . . The last vibration of the seventh eternity thrills through infinitude.

The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe. . . .

Preceding her Commentary on this verse of Stanza Three, H.P.B. speaks of the *magic* of Motion—"TOUCHING WITH ITS SWIFT WING (*simultaneously*) THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. . . ." (*S.D.* I, 63.) In the principle of unbroken unity in Time is the magic of the Cycle.

Motion—eternal, ceaseless Motion—is the "one absolute attribute" of the ONE LIFE. "That which is motionless cannot be Divine. But then there is nothing in fact and reality absolutely motionless within the universal soul." (*S.D.* I, 2.) On the plane of physical manifestation: "Occultism says that in all cases when matter *appears* inert, it is the most active. A wooden or a stone block is motionless and impenetrable to all intents and purposes. Nevertheless, and *de facto,* its particles are in ceaseless eternal vibration which is so rapid that to the physical eye the body seems absolutely devoid of motion, and the spatial distance between particles in their vibratory motion is—considered from another plane of being and perception—as great as that which separates snow flakes or drops of rain." (*S.D.* I, 507-8 fn.)

In the truly philosophical sense, then, Motion embraces all gradations of movement including apparent "rest"—as the swing of the pendulum illustrates. Having swung to its utmost point, the pendulum reaches a stopping-point which is, at the same time, the "point of return." The unbroken *continuity* that constitutes the thread of the cycles is illustrated also in this verse from the Ist Book of Manu: "At the expiration of each night (pralaya) Brahma, having been asleep, awakes, and, *through the sole energy of the motion,* CAUSES to emanate from *itself* the spirit, which in its essence is, and yet is not."

This paradox is implicit in the mystery of Creation which must forever remain incomprehensible without knowledge of the nature of Preservation and of Destruction—the other two *aspects* of the manifesting Power. Without preservation, what is "created" would at once cease to exist—whereas destruction constitutes the change to which every "created" thing is immediately subject.

Creation suggests the "Song of Life,"—uttering itself wherever the cycle of Life is on its ascending arc. Destruction typifies the "Dance of Death"—the essence of change. Death has its grim aspect for the human mind that associates it with personal loss alone, or shuns consideration of its actuality, but the symbolism of the *dance* provides the concept with all-encompassing scope and universality.

What associations are basic to the "dance"? Spontaneous activity; combinations of movement; vivid representation through perfection of movement of the unseen powers and forces behind the appearance of the dancer—every conceivable phenomenon of change lends itself to one of these categories. Death may devastate mercilessly, with a vitality suggested by the spinning Dervish. It may, on the other hand, fulfill itself without shadow of disturbance in the surrounding atmosphere. And in the evolution of man, the significance of Death has a philosophical import, as expressed in the mantramic statement of Wm. Q. Judge: "To the Ego, death comes ever as a friend."

The change called death or destruction is constantly observed and experienced, and is natural to the universal process of evolution—"just as a perfect flower must cease to be a perfect flower and die, in order to grow into a perfect fruit . . ."

Between the "great opposites" of Creation and Destruction is Preservation—*permanency* in Space and *continuity* in Time—which makes possible the record of sequential phenomena and events, the basis of all sciences and the histories of peoples.

Every Great Teacher represents the threefold universal process: "I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness," said Krishna in *The Bhagavad-Gita*. And H.P.B. came "to break the moulds of men's minds."

For each man to *know himself* as Creator-Preserver-Destroyer means that the Promethean powers of the Soul are unbound. The Unity of the Point and Circumference is realized on the Plane of action, through the use of the powers of Thought, Will and Feeling, or Imagination. "In this curve of the cycle," said Wm. Q. Judge, "each man is his own authority."

letters • questions • comment

EDITORS:

Often the formulation of a question within the Theosophical context is found to supply the essential ingredients of an answer. At other times, though, the attempt to put the terms of a puzzle on paper serves to convince the writer that no adequate answer *can* be put down. Such seems to be the case with me when I wonder about the nature of developments able to bridge the gap between leading intellectuals who employ Theosophical ideas and their unwillingness to recognize in H. P. Blavatsky a friend, a mentor, and a guide.

H.P.B. herself adopted a definition of Theosophy to the effect that any man *is* a Theosophist "who has an inspiration of his own to solve the universal problems." But such men of our time—say, for instance, W. Macneile Dixon, C. J. Ducasse, or Viktor Frankl—are never attracted to affiliation with groups of H.P.B. Theosophists. Some sort of barrier seems to exist between independent thinkers of great merit and those who call themselves, somewhat formally, "Theosophists." What is this barrier and how in time may it be breached?

Reader

In the first place, it seems necessary to realize that Theosophy is characteristically classified as a religion, and independent thinkers who lean towards the philosophy of reincarnation or other Theosophical ideas are apt to have little interest in anything which reminds them of a religious type of presentation.

To affirm the existence of a wisdom religion and to transmit tenets which are represented as being central to its existence comprised the exoteric work of H. P. Blavatsky. Yet, as she pointed out in such a variety of subtle ways, wisdom itself *cannot* be transmitted and yields only to individual discovery. This crucial aspect of the Theosophical Movement is of necessity esoteric, from a psychological point of view.

There is no doubt that there are writers, scholars, and many unknown thinkers in the world who are currently discovering aspects of the wisdom religion in their own way, or are at least in the stage

of ideation preparing them for such a discovery in the near future. If a man is in the process of discovering a portion of the Gnosis, it is the essence of that gnosis itself which he must touch. Recognition of the special value of certain transmitters of the Gnosis will of necessity come later. We should not, therefore, assume that such men as those described by our correspondent are woefully insensitive, or "blind" to the Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky. They may be busy doing something few of us are able to do—proceeding towards enlightenment in an extraordinarily self-reliant manner. But if they are not blind to the realities of a gnosis, they will inevitably come to a time when they are able to feel a rapport with the tradition of transmitted Theosophy, with H. P. Blavatsky, and those who have endeavored to carry on her work.

Such a perspective, at the very least, encourages Theosophists to refrain from classifying the worth of independent thinkers on the basis of their reactions to an overt doctrinal presentation of Theosophy. It is for Theosophists to demonstrate that, as H.P.B. insisted, Theosophy is essentially nonsectarian—that its teachings are not the property of any group of human beings, but are touched in degree by everyone. The "barriers" between those who call themselves "Theosophists" and those who disseminate theosophical ideas without reference to the particular word "Theosophy" cannot be battered down by attempts at special proselytism, no matter how well-intentioned. Such a barrier, like all barriers, is not thrust aside in an abrupt manner, but rather dissolves in the crucible of spiritual search, prompted by individual integrity.

It is said that even the greatest of Masters "always have hope," yet in The Bhagavad-Gita *we find this statement: "He who has attained to meditation should constantly strive to stay at rest in the Supreme, remaining in solitude and seclusion, having his body and his thoughts under control, without possessions and free from hope." How does one reconcile these two emphases?*

It is probable that in the first instance "hope" is being used in an abstract sense—hope for the enlightenment of all men—and in the second is used in a personal sense. The context of the *Gita* quotation seems to indicate that personal and illusionary hope should be forsaken; i.e., that personal achievement, personal fulfillment in the separative sense is an impossible and quite illusionary goal, and therefore the necessity to forsake particularized hopes is indicated. Does not the *Gita* urge us to sink this sort of hope in service to the

"total situation" in which we exist? The suffering involved in transcending purely personal motives is not to be avoided but cultivated. This will become a habit of fortitude and voluntary forsaking—a rendering of the lower into fuel for the higher.

"Suffering," in some sense, would seem to be a necessary element in laying down one evolutionary tool and picking up another, or, as H. P. Blavatsky puts it in *The Secret Doctrine*:

> It is quite natural that the pessimistically inclined profane, once convinced of Nature's numerous shortcomings and failures, and especially of her autophagous propensities, should imagine this to be the best evidence that there is no deity *in abscondito* within Nature, nor anything divine in her. Nor is it less natural that the materialist and the physicist should imagine that everything is due to blind force and chance, and to the survival of the *strongest*, even more often than of the fittest. But the Occultists, who regard physical nature as a bundle of most varied illusions on the plane of deceptive perceptions; who recognise in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility, which is visible in the silent influence of never-erring Karma, or *abstract* nature—the Occultists, we say, view the great Mother otherwise. Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (*S.D.* II, 475.)

It is a knowledge of these psychological processes and laws which leads to such remarks as are found in the *Dhammapada*. In the second chapter, Buddha indicates why the first stage of discipleship requires willingness to forego the idea of suddenly "converting" all men to wisdom:

> By endeavour, by vigilance, by discipline and self-control, let the wise man make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.
>
> When the prudent man overcomes sloth by vigilance he ascends to the terrace of wisdom. Sorrowless he surveys the sorrowful crowd. This wise man regards the foolish as the mountaineer from his high peak looks at those who are dwelling on the plains.

The fifth chapter of *The Dhammapada* explains why it is foolish to "hope" that the unwise among men may in a moment be led to attain wisdom: first they must themselves forsake their illusions,

and until then all the hope of all the wise teachers of eternity would be of no avail. Further:

> A fool associating himself with a wise man all his life sees not the truth, even as the spoon enjoys not the taste of the soup.
>
> But a thoughtful person associating with a wise man soon perceives the truth, even as the tongue enjoys the taste of the soup.

Yet, for the Buddha, no one is so sunk in ignorance as to make it impossible for him to change his attitude. The true hope for him is locked within his own capacity for decision. And the Wise Ones, knowing this hidden truth, are always prepared to nourish each germinal hope for attainment of a higher life—once it manifests in any form, within the individual. So the Buddha points out that, while the foolish are without "hope" so long as they remain foolish, a change is always possible. Gautama reminded his disciples that even "from a heap of rubbish on the roadside, a lily blooms, fragrant and pleasing; from a mass of blinded mortals arises the disciple of the truly Wise One, shining with exceeding glory of his own Wisdom."

HOW IS THE EGO DELUDED?

The Ego is deluded by ignorance, and hence incarnates and reincarnates in various states; that is, it obtains a vehicle for every state into which ignorance puts it. So it obtains an earthly vehicle (body and personality) which is delusive and binding on the Ego so long as ignorance of the truth continues. It leaves the earthly vehicle and goes to another state—Devachan—where it has a vehicle appropriate to that sphere, and is there deluded and detained by the ignorance which is related wholly to pure, noble, and pleasant thoughts. From that it comes again to the earthly sphere, and so on until the hour when ignorance is destroyed. The so-called "sinful nature" is in the earthly vehicle, but as that is a part of the whole which includes the Ego, the latter is responsible for permitting the lower to rule it, and therefore suffers. For the body and astral body do not suffer nor know nor feel; they are merely blind instruments for the Ego who knows and feels through them, and are also the weights and clogs which keep the Ego down so long as ignorance prevails. Hence the continual revolving from one sphere to another.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

NEO-PLATONIC INFLUENCE IN WESTERN THOUGHT

The period, beginning with Buddha and Pythagoras at the one end, and the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics at the other, is the only focus left in History wherein converge for the last time the bright rays of light streaming from the æons of time gone by, unobscured by the hand of bigotry and fanaticism.

THUS did H. P. Blavatsky pay tribute to the celebrated Neo-Platonists. It is noteworthy that Madame Blavatsky further honored the Eclectic School of Alexandria by tracing the term Theosophy to its members, and by devoting the first pages of *The Key to Theosophy* to an account of Neo-Platonic philosophy, calling attention to the close parallel between the work of the Eclectic School and that of the Theosophical Movement. H.P.B. had also struck this keynote in the introductory chapter to *Isis Unveiled* by referring to the school of Ammonius Saccas, as well as to the teachings of his predecessors, Pythagoras and Plato. Much of the second volume of *Isis* was devoted to the Alexandrians and the Gnostics and to the contribution they made to the greater Theosophical Movement. It is they who enhanced the luster which made Alexandria one of the most renowned and cultured cities of all times.

Perhaps the "Three Objects" of the Theosophical Society will be seen in larger perspective if we realize that they have been the "objects" of all great efforts at education and reform, particularly those of the Neo-Platonists. For the Philaletheans, the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood was certainly the "first" object. They were "Lovers of Truth," this meaning for them, as it does for present-day Theosophists, "the exemplification in practice of those [Theosophical] Principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood." Brotherhood was perhaps the most important aspect of their whole endeavor—to grow out of the re-union of man's Self with God, or the "flight of the Alone to the Alone."

The identification of the Neo-Platonists as "Eclectics" and "Analogeticists" suggests a concern with the basic principles underlying

all religions and philosophies; and their use of the method of analogy and correspondence in solving the great mysteries of the universe and of man is the same as that insisted upon by H.P.B., in accordance with the Hermetic axiom, "As above, so below." The theurgy made known chiefly by Iamblichus demonstrated their knowledge and skill in line with the clauses of the Third Object of the Theosophical Society. Needless to say, they laid great emphasis on the ideas Theosophists call "the Three Fundamentals," although the Third, which points to the goal, and the First, which deals with Deity, were stressed at that particular juncture of the cycles.

While Ammonius Saccas was the founder of the Alexandrian School, and was surnamed "Theodidactos," or "God-taught," he left nothing in writing. It was his disciple Plotinus, "the noblest, highest and grandest of all the Neo-Platonists after the founder of the school," who expounded the teachings of Ammonius. "He [Plotinus]," says H.P.B. in the *Theosophical Glossary,* "was the most enthusiastic of the Philaletheans whose aim was to found a religion on a system of the intellectual abstraction, which is true Theosophy."

Porphyry, however, is said to have been "the most practically philosophical, and the soberest, of all the Neo-Platonists, and second only to Plotinus," and to him we are indebted for the preservation and arrangement of the works of Plotinus into six series of nine books, known thereafter as the *Enneads.* Porphyry devoted his efforts to showing the practical importance of philosophy in daily life. The end of philosophy, with him, according to a biographer, was "morality"—helping to heal man of his infirmities, urging him to live a purer and more aspiring life. Of all the Neo-Platonists, says H.P.B., "Porphyry approached the nearest to real Theosophy as now taught by the Eastern secret school." He held that "the Soul should be as far as possible freed from the bonds of matter." He recommends the practice of abstinence, saying that "we should be like the gods if we could abstain from vegetable as well as animal food." Porphyry's system adjured purity; and he practiced it.

The Church fathers considered Porphyry to be the bitterest and most irreconcilable enemy of Christianity. Yet, even in the storm of controversy, scarcely a word seems to have been uttered against the private life of Porphyry. And, though disparaging "Christianity," he praised Christ, according to St. Augustine. Jesus, Porphyry asserted, was a good and wise man.

Among the Neo-Platonists towers the figure of Iamblichus, who, according to H. P. Blavatsky, was "a great Theurgist, mystic, and writer . . . [who] may be called the founder of the theurgic magic among the Neo-Platonists and the reviver of the practical mysteries outside of temple or fane." His moral character is acknowledged by all impartial writers to be excellent and holy, and, H.P.B. says, "his learning was of the highest magnitude." Though Iamblichus wrote extensively, but few of his works survived the vandalism of the early Christians and later barbarians, so that his only extant writings are the *Egyptian Mysteries* and *Life of Pythagoras* and his treatise *On Daemons*—monuments of learning and mystic lore. Iamblichus was versed not only in Neo-Platonic thought, but also in Egyptian, Chaldean, and Oriental wisdom. He taught that the One, universal MONAD, was the principle of unity, or homogeneity, as well as of all diversity, or heterogeneity; his "Duad" was what we call Buddhi-Manas; and the Three was Buddhi-Manas plus lower Manas.

Another great Neo-Platonist was Hypatia, close friend and instructor of the Christian bishop, Synesius. Other notable followers of the school included Simplicius, Olympiodorus, the Emperor Julian, Maximus of Tyre, Plutarch, and Apuleius. There were seven "Wise Ones" of the Neo-Platonic movement left when Justinian by edict closed their last school in Athens in A.D. 529 and prohibited instruction in philosophy. At this time Damascius, Hermias, Simplicius, and Isidorus emigrated to Persia, where they influenced the rise of Sufism.

The murder of Hypatia, the last of the Alexandrian Platonists, by a Christian mob jealous of her influence initiated the thousand years of darkness of the Middle Ages. Thus, the thousand years of "light," from Buddha to the murder of Hypatia, was followed by a millennium of darkness, ignorance, bigotry, and fanaticism, the like of which the world had never known. While the Renaissance restored some of the light of antiquity, we may not see its full flowering until the next century. We may experience at the same time the converging forces of a tremendous epoch with the conjunction of, not only the thousand-year cycle, but the centenary cycle of Theosophic regeneration. Who knows but that the determination of Tsong Kha Pa to attempt this series of impulsions was not somehow related to the 5000-year period since Krishna (maturing in 1897), the 2500-year cycle since Buddha, the 2100-odd years of the Zodiacal cycle—and even, perchance, the million-year cycle of Atlantean greatness!

There has been an attraction in the Neo-Platonists for Theosophical students, as well as for great minds of the European cycle of civilization, which may be partially explained by the 1500-year cycle of reincarnation. Who can say but that the same individuals worked then as now, and with identical objectives? Perhaps there is more than coincidence in the link between the murder of Hypatia in A.D. 414 and the outbreak just 1500 years later of the first World War in 1914.

The Alexandrian School proper lasted just two hundred years. Subsequently two great revivals of its teachings occurred, which initiated the revival of learning and ancient philosophy in the Italian Renaissance. In the fifteenth century, just about a thousand years after the destruction of the Alexandrian School, certain great thinkers brought about a rebirth of Platonism: Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and John Reuchlin. This trio was patronized by the leading house of Florence, the Medici. Gemistus Pletho might be considered the "Karmic Agent" in this epochal event, for he brought from Byzantium the precious manuscripts which Ficino, as a mere youth of twenty, labored to translate into Latin. These manuscripts included the works of Plato, Plotinus, Hermes Trismegistus, and others.

Later, in the seventeenth Century, the Cambridge Platonists had a substantial share in affecting the "climate of opinion" just when the conflict between Religion and Science was in its beginning. Once again, a trio of great thinkers appeared—Henry More, Ralph Cudworth and John Smith. And Oxford, although the stronghold of Aristotelianism, saw the emergence of two staunch "Platonists," Joseph Glanvill and Sir Thomas Browne.

Two hundred years later the Transcendentalists of New England renewed the Platonic vision, encompassing in their purview much that had transpired from the time of Krishna—the *Gita, Dhammapada,* the thought of Plato, Plotinus, Ficino, More, and even of the German Transcendentalists Goethe and Schiller. Emerson was nicknamed "Plato" by Bronson Alcott, and the latter "Socrates" by Emerson! Thoreau demonstrated the practicality of the Transcendentalist outlook; Emerson embodied it in his lectures all over the country; and Bronson Alcott "educated the youth," as did Socrates. These three, along with lesser "stars" of Transcendentalism, laid groundwork in America for the Theosophical Movement of the last century.

Within the 1500-year cycle, in our modern epoch, another trio appeared more recently in England as English reincarnationists: W. Macneile Dixon, famed for his *Human Situation;* J. E. McTaggart, the metaphysician, preoccupied with the intricacies and practical implications of the doctrine of rebirth; and G. Lowes Dickinson, whose arguments for reincarnation were well within the comprehension of the common man.

Another "Theosophist Unaware," apparently unheralded by any cyclic computations, but none the less potent in his contribution was Thomas Taylor, who labored for nearly half a century, alone and unappreciated by his contemporaries, to bring the Western world the extant works of all the Neo-Platonists. For the first time in history the rare and hitherto inaccessible works and fragments of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus, the complete works of Plato and Aristotle, appeared in English translation through the indefatigable hand of Thomas Taylor, the eighteenth-century Platonist. To him, Emerson and Alcott owed much of their inspiration and love for the Platonic tradition. In a list of books purchased in England by Alcott, which appeared in the *Dial* (the magazine of the Transcendentalists), the works of Taylor were prominent.

Mr. Judge in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (I, 38-9) honors the Neo-Platonists by suggesting that their works are "instinct with a life of their own *which changes the vibrations.*" He found some abstruse theological writing of Plotinus to have an elevating and ennobling effect on him, as also Dr. Taylor's explanation of the Wanderings of Ulysses. The Greek hymn on page 80 of *The Ocean of Theosophy* and the quotation on page 41 of *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* are both from Synesius—translated by Taylor. Again, Mr. Judge quotes from Thomas Taylor's *Introduction to Mystical Hymns of Orpheus* in "The Syntheis of Occult Science":

> The peculiarity of this theology, and in which its transcendency consists, is this, that it does not consider the highest God to be the principle of beings, but the *principle of Principles,* i.e., of deiform processions from itself, all which are eternally rooted in the unfathomable depths of the immensely great source of their existence, and of which they may be called supersensuous ramifications and super-luminous blossoms.

TEMPTER AND REDEEMER

IT is a characteristic of the lower human nature to avoid responsibility wherever and whenever possible. Responsibility falls upon us like the snow, gently at first when it is easily brushed off, but when the heavy fall commences, we cry for help, not realizing that all Karma is of our own making. From the earliest times man has looked outside himself for the cause of the evil that befalls him. The primitive races believed in multiple evil spirits that had to be propitiated and, as formal religion crystallized, the devil or Satan became the great Tempter. The unphilosophical doctrine of Original Sin further shifted the responsibility from the individual. Under its tenets he is supposed to be born and live in sin because the first man ate an apple from the Tree of Knowledge against God's command, when living in the Garden of Eden. When questioned, Adam puts the blame upon the woman Eve, who in her turn blames the Serpent. Thus in the allegory of Eden, accepted literally by Western religions, the refusal to accept responsibility initiated the need for a Redeemer. This need created a double standard for conduct: one applicable to the religious life, the other as a basis for mundane action. For we concentrate fiercely to reach success in a given occupation with no thought of sin or redemption. If we live by two standards we become like one afflicted with double vision, unable to focus moral perceptions with the necessary clarity.

Where, then, lies the origin of evil, and who is the Tempter? Until the nineteenth century heralded evolution, and a new concept of psychology was formed, the old thought-forms held the race mind in passive submission. God was the source of all good, and from the devil flowed all the evil. The question of the origin of evil had been finally settled, or so it appeared. It is hard for twentieth-century thinkers to realize the extent of the revolution caused by the teachings of evolution, and the dawn of our present psychology. But out of the tumult arose a new shibboleth, a phrase upon which to hang the useless garments of the thinking of centuries. One could still fall back comfortably upon that thinking in private, but in public it was

"mind over matter" that brought one quickly up to date. At the turn of the century another revolution developed in the knowledge of the nature of matter, and for two decades the leaders in science talked of throwing out, bag and baggage, the scientific thought of the past. Soon the power of mind over matter retreated into the background, and the power of research asserted itself with astonishing results in all fields of endeavor. Thus having passed the middle of the twentieth century we find the human mind freer than ever before and, as predicted by H. P. Blavatsky, the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* are now being vindicated. Even with this very brief glance at change during the past hundred years, we can have reason to hope that the explanation of evil, as set forth in Theosophical teachings, may find wide acceptance before the century closes. Now that man's origin is being sought in terms of millions instead of thousands of years, the eighteen million allotted by Theosophy for the evolution of the present two-sexed humanity does not appear so foreign to scientific thought. It is this long evolution which allowed the human race to become so immersed in gross matter that the spiritual sight of the earliest races was lost. The effect of this loss upon mind was profound, and evil became the bastard progeny of material existence.

Matter is a word which may be differently construed. It has been defined as substance of which physical objects are composed. To the average person it means the world about us, that which we touch and see. It is the basis for thought and action through the brain, itself composed of subtle substance. To the physicist matter becomes the inner universe of the electron-microscope, a field for profound research. But all agree that whatever we see or touch is in a state of vibration, and it is said that the hardness of steel, to the touch, is caused by the almost incomprehensible rapidity of the vibrations among the atoms composing it. There is also latent intelligence and memory in all matter. This potentiality, dormant in the mineral, awakens as matter ascends the ladder of the kingdoms of nature. Thus in the vegetable kingdom we find the ability to adjust to environment, to respond to seasonal conditions, to blossom and produce seeds. In the animal kingdom matter has risen to a response to emotional life and movement unknown to the vegetable, and automatic action becomes highly developed. A greater degree of sensitivity and intelligence becomes evident in the human kingdom; for matter is there in contact with the self-conscious mind. This con-

tact causes matter to become mirror-like, and to reflect the thinking of that mind. It is understandable, therefore, that the quality of the matter of which the brain is composed will determine whether the higher *buddhic* vibrations, or the lower *kamic* impulses, will be felt more strongly.

Thought is ever at work attracting myriads of infinitesimal lives that enter the body. The grosser the thoughts, the grosser the lives attracted. Therefore the nature of a life's meditation will eventually enter into the quality of the brain material, a determining factor in its usefulness to the higher or lower *Manas*. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand our present inability to perceive our spiritual nature and origin. This lack has aroused desire for all that material life may offer of gain and self-gratification. "He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger loss of memory, from loss of memory the loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all." If we conceive the effects of this sequence as extending over a vast evolutionary period, of countless incarnations in which the individual does little to check the loss of discrimination, we can comprehend how deeply rooted evil has become, and how firmly it has engrossed the mind. It is only the few who strive through self effort to regain the spiritual knowledge, the wisdom that once dominated the spiritual being. This being started from "the higher spheres," journeying down into matter to obtain experience and knowledge. So far the journey has resulted, for the majority, in ignorance and therefore "sin."

But how can one accept these ideas when there are many, devoutly believing in their various religions, who sincerely attempt to follow their teachings? Are not these good people? Outwardly this is so; inwardly there is always delayed Karma which, like water damned up, remains awaiting conditions which will allow it to flow again. The danger of delayed Karma is that its nature is unknown, and conditions may arise in the present life, or another, which will open up the flood-gates. If the ego has looked outside the Self for both Tempter and Redeemer, he may be bereft of the needed spiritual strength to meet the new conditions. But when the individual assumes *full responsibility,* in prosperity or adversity, in health or sickness, looking no longer outside for the sources of good or evil, there arises within him a strength that is indomitable, for he has awakened to the God Spirit within.

Having sought and found the origin of evil, the Tempter can no longer remain hidden, but may be seen dwelling in the mind absorbed by desire and the sense life. Therein lies the source of all temptation. "If thou wouldst not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thine own creations, the children of thy thoughts . . ." The Tempter is therefore, no anthropomorphic devil, but the accumulation of ages of mental deposits created by desires which have never been purged and which find fertile soil in the mind from one incarnation to another. Once this fearsome fact is realized, two divergent paths appear: one leads to eventual annihilation in the perfection of evil; the other to endless degrees of perfection in immortal spirit. The mind is therefore to be regarded as both "Tempter and Redeemer" in our past stages of evolution. How can it be otherwise? For on the one hand there are those immersed in desire for personal satisfaction, while on the other are those who have thrown out the lower impulses; and both attitudes are the result of thought.

Once the redeeming faculties of the mind are brought into action the accumulated Karma of the conquered Tempter has to be borne by the ego. The heroism of such an ego, who wages this fight to the death, is the greatest of all heroisms. It is never known and praised abroad, but is won in the deep solitude of the inner life of the soul.

The Soul Becomes

From one Soul of the Universe are all Souls derived. . . . Of these Souls there are many changes, some into a more fortunate estate, and some quite contrary. . . . Not all human souls but only the pious ones are divine. Once separated from the body, and after the struggle to acquire piety, which consists in knowing God and injuring none, such a soul becomes all intelligence. The impious soul, however, punishes itself by seeking a human body to enter into, for no other body can receive a human soul; it cannot enter the body of an animal devoid of reason. Divine law preserves the human soul from such infamy. . . .

The Soul passeth from form to form; and the mansions of her pilgrimage are manifold. Thou puttest off thy bodies as raiment; and as vesture dost thou fold them up. Thou art from old, O Soul of Man; yea, thou art from everlasting.

—*Book of Hermes*

YOUTH FORUM

Belief and Knowledge

More books are being printed and read today than at any other time in history; yet despite (or perhaps, because of) this enormous impulse towards scientific and literary awareness, there has seldom, if ever, been a more poignant sense of alienation from genuine, first-hand knowledge. We hold innumerable beliefs about almost every subject, but what do we really know?

Often, of course, we fool ourselves into thinking that "common knowledge" is our own knowledge. For instance, everyone "knew" during the Middle Ages that Eden was situated at the source of the Euphrates, just as everyone today "knows" that man has descended from the apes. But facts, even if true, are not satisfying to a man's whole being unless he can in some deep way see their truth and significance. Job was not comforted by his friends' sophistic defenses of God's actions. His own belief was far deeper than theirs—he realized that the very attempt to defend the actions of the Almighty was impious and presumptuous—yet despite the strength of his faith he had to *see* God for himself before he could know from the depths of his soul that his punishment was not an injustice.

Theosophically, the story of Job has been interpreted as a man's initiation into the realm of Adepts, and such an interpretation is indeed suggestive, for it makes one wonder about the depth of one's own knowledge of the basic principles, and cautions one against being glib in his explanation of his philosophy to others. The false comforters argued that God is just, and that therefore Job's sufferings must be the result of sinfulness. Correspondingly, Theosophists must beware of the tendency to offer as "comfort" such words as, "It is your own Karma." Regardless of whether or not such words are true, they will only aggravate a man's sufferings unless he comes to *see* their truth and revelance. Nor is it enough that he see the truth

intellectually. The intellect can be twisted to "prove" or "disprove" any concept in the world. A man must have a soul vision of the truth before his belief is transformed into knowledge. "God" must appear out of a whirlwind and speak to him. Until then, nothing is certain, except, perhaps, the simple awareness of existence.

But one keeps on reading the books, in hope of finding some sort of second-hand enlightenment. Perhaps the greatest work of literature, from this point of view, would be one that inspires a person to stop reading for a while, and to reflect. Krishna asks Arjuna what he has to do with "all this knowledge," implying, perhaps, that a man cannot cope with more knowledge than he has the moral power to use. The striving to "live the good life," then, seems the best groundwork for the eventual attainment of spiritual certainties. And yet, though great self-discipline is necessary preparation, it seems equally evident that one must be highly "involved in Mankind," if he is ever to develop that inner stillness, that sense of receptive expectancy, that calmness, through which alone the spirit may be heard.

Two Kinds of Knowledge

We know that most of the universe is composed of things about which we can acquire knowledge but which cannot know us, and that this one-sided relation enables us to manipulate them as we wish, but collectively, we have not yet drawn the obvious moral, namely, that if nothing in creation is responsible for our existence then we are responsible for all created things. Most individual scientists, certainly all the best ones, have been and still are contemplatives who rejoice in their discoveries, not for the practical value they may have, but because it is a joy and wonder to know that things are as they are. Unfortunately their innocent indifference to practical values has made them the slaves of that faceless fabulously wealthy Leviathan called Science which has no concern whatever for the right of anything or anyone to exist except its anonymous power that acknowledges no limits, and that has a scarcely disguised contempt for those whom it employs.

—W. H. Auden

on the lookout

Another Tribute to H. P. Blavatsky

The November, 1962, issue of *Psychic Observer* contains a long article by Grahame W. Barratt, titled "The Amazing Vindication of H. P. Blavatsky." Mr. Barratt is no stranger to readers of Lookout, for he has previously attempted to show the immense philosophical significance of the basic propositions of H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine*. The present article deals principally with those current scientific findings which Mr. Barratt feels corroborate H.P.B.'s assertions regarding the age of man on earth and the true properties of light. Mr. Barratt explains at the outset his own involvement:

> It is a rare thing to have the gratification of knowing that a well loved friend is at last vindicated, for indeed the scientific world itself has actually vindicated H. P. Blavatsky. Theosophists and occult students all over the world rejoice at the news; few thought such a dramatic vindication possible, in spite of the fact that H. P. Blavatsky herself prophesied that the twentieth century would find acceptance of her doctrines an accomplished fact.

Transcendence of Calumny

Mr. Barratt continues:

> The infamous "Hodgson Report" dubbed her "the greatest impostor in history"; today we know otherwise; we know that she was among the greatest teachers of history; that she bravely endured a martyrdom of calumny and insult in her endeavour to open the eyes of mankind. For those who have eyes to see, she has written the textbooks of all true Science for centuries to come, and men will know that mere intellect is not enough to unravel the enigmas of mother Nature.
>
> When on May 8th, 1891, the soul of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was removed from the suffering body, a great force for the helping of mankind was lost. May she be reborn to us speedily, and above all may we have the inner discernment to know her, even if she comes in quite another type of personality. H.P.B. is vindicated! May she return to a world that will receive her as a benefactor of mankind.

Outline of Fundamental Doctrine

Mr. Barratt's analysis of the essential contrast between the perspective of H.P.B. and that of mechanistic science focuses upon the two words, "life" and "death." The mechanist, concerned with the external motions of material bodies, becomes involved with the processes which lead to death—that is, to loss of energy, entropy, and deterioration. But as Barratt puts it: "The occult student can see the reality of eternal LIFE. We live in a world of decay, wear, limit, and bodily death. The occult world—the great everywhere at the back of the visible Sun—is eternal and never-dying."

As to the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine,* Mr. Barratt summarizes as follows:

> The Secret Doctrine tells us that there are three distinct fields or channels of evolution: The Spiritual, the Intellectual, and the Physical. All three interact, yet each remains as a complete field in itself, and until we reach the condition of true enlightenment, the correlation of these energies will be difficult to comprehend. These are but a few of the wonderfully constructive doctrines of H.P.B. The creation of the Universe and man by cosmic elementals whose graded hierarchies reach to the humblest amoeboid forms, would take many such articles as the present to describe. Students can do this for themselves by study of the Doctrine. A teacher should be sought, for much that is of value may otherwise be obscure or indigestible to the raw beginner.

Theosophical Perspectives on "Science"

The November issue of the American *Theosophist* is devoted, in entirety, to articles dealing with scientific fields and perspectives, under the general heading: "Some Aspects of Science and Its Emerging Philosophy." In an explanatory editorial, Joy Mills emphasizes a view which every serious student of H.P.B. may well endorse:

> The theosophical student does not rest his case on an enumeration of the instances in which modern scientific advances have been presaged by occult tradition nor is he dismayed by certain discrepancies, which he is the first to acknowledge, between contemporary findings and statements in the classical literature of Theosophy. He is more profoundly concerned with the need for a philosophic and metaphysical basis broad enough and lofty enough to give scope and purpose to man's pursuit of knowledge, whether that pursuit be in fields traditionally reserved for religion or in those designated as science. A comprehensive philosophy perceives no either/or distinction between science and religion, but permits both to be illuminated in the light of universal conceptualizations. That science itself is now reaching toward the

horizons of such a comprehensive view is evidenced by the growing need for man to find purpose and meaning in all his discoveries, even those discoveries which seem to hold within them the explosive seeds of his self-destruction.

Science and "The Future"

A brief article by Dr. John Hamaker, "The Future of Science and Man," contributes some predictions of a philosophical nature. "Scientific knowledge," Dr. Hamaker writes, "will steadily increase, straining our libraries and minds to the limit, and from it will be distilled an ever more comprehensive picture of the universe and man's place in it." The article continues:

> More and more individuals will realize that the important thing is to understand the unity behind the differences. It will be realized that knowledge and theory are not enough, for wisdom must guide the power that they represent. At first a tiny minority, these people would eventually be numerous enough to make a real difference in the conduct of human affairs.
>
> This last is the real key to the future. Man has much to learn about the underlying unity of both the world about him and the complex world of his own nature. Religions have always tried to keep him aware of this unity but he has been content with ideas and beliefs *about* it. Now the march of evolution is bringing him towards the point where he must know it more directly. Otherwise he cannot safely use the great knowledge that is his. Since he does not now have the means to do this, it will take concentrated effort on his part to develop the means. Just as he developed science by becoming preoccupied with knowledge and the means of obtaining it, so he must become preoccupied with the underlying thread of unity and the ways to realize it. As this shift in emphasis proceeds, science, as we know it, will become de-emphasized. Science will give way to that which is greater than it is for which it has prepared the way.

On The Bible—and Biblical Interpretation

An article by Sanche De Gramont in the Los Angeles *Times* (Nov. 25, 1962) outlines a major issue which "lingers in the background of the [present Vatican Ecumenical] council as a vast and basic divergence": the amount of latitude that may properly be assumed by Roman Catholic exegetes. One school of theologians wishes to "play down the scientific approach to interpretation of the Bible . . . on the ground that it is safe-guarding the divine character of scripture," whereas the other school wishes to take full advantage of "the dis-

coveries of science, the findings of archeology, and the material in newly discovered texts." The latter school bases its liberalism on the directives of Pope Pius XII, who said in his 1943 encyclical:

> Quite wrongly do some pretend, not rightly understanding the conditions of Biblical study, that nothing remains to be added by the Catholic exegetes [interpreters] to what Christian antiquity has produced. Our times have brought to light so many things which call for a fresh investigation and a new examination, and which stimulate the practical study of the present day interpreters. . . . All should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected.

Meaningful Catholic-Protestant Dialogue

The *Christian Century* for Nov. 28, in an article titled "Setback for Rome's Bible Scholars," also refers to Pope Pius' encyclical and to an "even more significant letter" (written to Cardinal Suhard in 1948) as "the two documents [which] opened doors to research for Roman Catholic scholars." As a result of the new latitude permitted, says the article: "Suddenly, an area had been opened where they [Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetes] could meet together. Suddenly, they had common problems and could begin to learn from each other. Suddenly, the ecumenical dialogue became fruitful." The article, however, continues in less optimistic vein, noting the reactionary movement gaining momentum within the Roman church:

> At present a battle is in progress in Rome which gives reason for grave anxiety. For a few years now the Pontifical Biblical Institute [exponents of liberal exegesis] has been the object of sharp attacks from a group which seems to be gaining influence. Two years ago there appeared in *Divinitas,* the journal of the Pontifical Lateran University [representing the reactionaries], a long article embodying immoderate criticism of a small work published by a teacher in the Biblical Institute . . . The author of the article, A. Romeo, proceeding from the conviction that the newer exegesis threatens the integrity of ecclesiastical doctrine, seeks to prove that the scientific students of the Bible wrongly appeal to the encyclical [of Pius XII]. . . .
>
> It was not difficult for the Biblical Institute to refute Romeo. Indeed, had his article not reflected the opinion of influential personalities, it would have been considered to merit no attention whatever. But in its August 24, 1961, issue, *L'Osservatore Romano* published an article in similar vein by Cardinal Ruffini, who is one of the ten presidents of the Vatican Council now in session, and other attacks on the *Divinitas* article followed. It is an indi-

> cation of the Roman Catholic mood with regard to exegesis that the holy Office issued on June 20, 1961, a *Monitum* pointing out the dangers of a too-free exegesis. . . .

The *Christian Century* feels that this reactionary trend does not augur well for continued meaningful "dialogue" between Catholic and Protestant theologians.

Bible of Divine or Secular Origin?

Naturally, both schools of Catholic theologians agree on "the divine character of the scripture." But not all Protestant ministers do —certainly not in its entirety. For example, the *Ottawa Journal* (Aug. 25, 1962) states that "a noted Methodist minister, Dr. Leslie Weatherhead of London, Canada, said he would like to censor the Bible, adding there were many portions that he would 'blue-pencil'." Nor does the informed laity nowadays believe that the entire Bible is "the revealed Word of God." Evidence of this is given in the recent publication of Mark Twain's ribald satire of early twentieth-century Christianity and professing Christians. In his third letter from Satan to the archangels Gabriel and Michael, Satan says:

> One of his principal religions is called the Christian. A sketch of it will interest you. It is set forth in detail in a book containing two million words, called the Old and New Testaments. Also it has another name—The Word of God. For the Christian thinks every word of it was dictated by God—the one I have been speaking of.
>
> It is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it; and some clever fables; and some blood-drenched history; and some good morals; and a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies.

Liberalism in Extenso

Dr. Weatherhead, apparently, agrees to some extent with Twain, for the *Ottawa Journal* goes on:

> Dr. Weatherhead said he would delete "a lot of bloody massacres and a lot of smutty little pieces that choir boys read on the quiet. They read the rapes and the massacres which are supposed to have been ordered by God. What's the point of reading them?"
>
> The Bible was written, he said, by human men who wrote stories of situations as they saw them. This has led to "irrelevance" today, Dr. Weatherhead added. "We have learned much since those times."

Now sixty-eight years old, Dr. Weatherhead has long been prominent in interdenominational activities. According to the *Journal*:

The Methodist minister has often been in the news. In 1953 he gave a sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral here [London, Canada] saying he was willing to be reordained by an Anglican bishop "if such action would contribute to the reunion of the worldwide church." Three years later he called for the formation of a United Free Church that would include Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists.

Dr. Weatherhead and Reincarnation

Readers of THEOSOPHY may recall that Dr. Weatherhead is the author of a pamphlet titled *The Case for Reincarnation* which Lookout (47:423) called "the best brief treatment of reincarnation ever provided by a Christian minister." On page 9 of this pamphlet Dr. Weatherhead says:

> The intelligent Christian believes that God is working out a plan in the lives of all men and women, and that the consummation of this plan will mean that His will is "done on earth as it is in heaven."
>
> Now if every birth in the world is the birth of a new soul, I don't see how progress can ever thus be consummated. Each has to begin at scratch and passes away from the life of the earth seventy or eighty years later. How then can there be progress in the innermost things of the heart? We can pass on *some* wisdom and, in outward circumstance, those who follow us can in some ways go on where we left off. They will not have to re-discover electricity or atomic energy. But they *will* have to discover, for example, each for himself, the vital supremacy of love and how to master selfish desire. Each child is born a selfish little animal, surrounded, it may be, by the enlightened, but not able in character to begin where the most saintly parent left off.

Why Forward but not Backward Immortality?

Dr. Weatherhead continues:

> An illustration is provided if one goes back to revisit one's old school. When I did this I found better lighting, better blackboards, better maps, better desks, but two boys were standing outside the headmaster's study waiting to be caned, just as I used to do. The progress is in outward things. It cannot be in inward things as long as naughty boys keep joining the school.
>
> How can a world progress in inner things—which are the most important—if the birth of every new generation fills the world with unregenerate souls full of original sin? There can never be a perfect world unless gradually those born into it can take advantage of lessons learned in earlier lives instead of starting at scratch.
>
> These thoughts make me agree with the late Dean Inge, no

mean thinker, who said of the doctrine of reincarnation, "I find it both credible and attractive."

One wonders why men have so readily accepted the idea of a life *after* death and so largely, in the West, discarded the idea of a life *before* birth. So many arguments for a one-way immortality seem to me *cogent* for a two-way life outside the present body.

A Classic on Buddhism Reissued

Among the most attractive recent publishing ventures of the Charles E. Tuttle Company (Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan) is a new edition of Alice Getty's *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*—a work which is philosophically informative as well as detailed on scholarly points. This book was first published in 1914, revised in 1928, and is still regarded as one of the finest primary sources on "Buddhist lore." The present volume also contains a valuable introduction by the original translator from the French, Dr. M. J. Deniker.

A portion of the chapter titled "The Dhyani-Bodhisattva" will indicate how this work develops distinctions within the Buddhist traditions—distinctions emphasized by H. P. Blavatsky:

Two Paths from One

According to the Northern Buddhist school, there are both mortal and celestial Bodhisattvas.

A mortal Bodhisattva is one who has manifested himself on earth in human form, in a series of incarnations, until such a time as he has acquired sufficient merit and enlightenment to receive Buddhahood.

Like Gautama Buddha in his incarnation of the *arhat* Sumedha, the Bodhisattva may have been, in a former re-birth, an *arhat* bent on his own salvation who, becoming inspired with the desire for Bodhi in order to save mankind, renounced his *arhat*-ship.

It is unusual, however, for the future Bodhisattva to have been an *arhat*. In the first stage, he usually becomes a candidate to Bodhisattvahood by the practice of the six Paramitas, or Transcendent Virtues, through which he is to accumulate merit.

The second stage of the Bodhisattva is reached when he becomes *conscious* of the desire for Buddhahood. This illumination is called "Bodhi-citta." The aspirant, now aware of his wish for Bodhi, must make the vow that he will re-enter, or continue to remain in, the world of suffering for the sole purpose of saving mankind.

This, the Great Vow of the Bodhisattva, however, does not make the aspirant a Bodhisattva. It is only when he enters on the Path of Bodhi that he reaches the third stage, at which he becomes a Bodhisattva.

"Help Nature and Work on with Her"

This admonition from H. P. Blavatsky's *Voice of the Silence* also expresses the underlying theme of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Three short paragraphs from that excellent book summarize Mrs. Carson's approach:

> As man proceeds toward his announced goal of the conquest of nature, he has written a depressing record of destruction, directed not only against the earth he inhabits but against the life that shares it with him.
>
> The history of the recent centuries has its black passages—the slaughter of the buffalo on the Western plains, the massacre of the shorebirds by the market gunners, the near-extermination of the egrets for their plumage. Now, to these and others like them, we are adding a new chapter and a new kind of havoc—the direct killing of birds, mammals, fishes and indeed practically every form of wildlife by chemical insecticides indiscriminately sprayed on the land.
>
> The "control of nature" is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man. The concepts and practices of applied entomology for the most part date from that Stone Age of science. It is our alarming misfortune that so primitive a science has armed itself with the most modern and terrible weapons, and that in turning them against the insects it has also turned them against the earth.

Intimations of "Natural Philosophy"

A review of *Silent Spring* in *Manas* (Dec. 5, 1962) places in a broad context the current debate on the justification of Mrs. Carson's charges:

> *Silent Spring* has been treated as a spectacular attack upon the manufacturers of insecticides—with asides on the gullibility of farmers and government agencies specializing in agricultural improvement. Controversy certainly is lively on the validity of many of Mrs. Carson's statements and prognostications, but we see in the book another profoundly important invitation to the rediscovery of what might be called "natural philosophy." Often biological specialists fail to find some concept of "wholeness" for nature and man against which to evaluate the effects of specific discoveries; the great naturalists and conversationists are such, perhaps, more so by temperament and philosophy than by profession. Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* and Joseph Wood Krutch's *Conservation Is Not Enough* proffer prime examples of the outlook which ensures protection against the misuse of techniques for controlling one portion of nature at the expense of another.

> Finally, there is no essential difference between the dangers to which Mrs. Carson calls our attention and the more dramatic dangers of nuclear fallout. *Silent Spring* is less an indictment of certain persons and professions than an exposure of potentially fatal immaturities in a technological civilization. The Greeks, we think, were less immature with their nature gods of the pantheon, for this mythology kept all men, from childhood onwards, constantly aware of mystical interdependence with the forces and processes upon which human existence depends.

Positive Approach to Mental Health

William C. Menninger, M.D., of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, advises annual "emotional checkups" in addition to physical ones. (*This Week* Magazine, Jan. 7, 1962.) There are certain routine questions he would ask at such a time, Dr. Menninger says: "How do you get along with other people? Whom do you like? Whom don't you like and why? How good are your personal relationships? Do you lose your temper? Do you get jittery? Do you get so anxious you can't function?" Although everyone is anxious and tense at times, Dr. Menninger says, "if you are chronically full of tension you are sick." What we note particularly, however, in the summing up is his tacit recognition of the noëtic aspect of man's nature and its primary importance in maintaining mental health:

> The essence of all these suggestions is the recognition that we have to have the courage, before we look at other people, to look at ourselves. The need begins in our minds. We are part of other people, and it is only as we have courage to see how we can handle our own emotions normally and constructively that we shall tend to eliminate some of our own selfishness, our own prejudices, our own resentments, our own bigotry.
>
> Only in this way can we increase our own capacity for humility, to be able—in the broad sense of the word—to love.

Animal Experimentation

The Humane Society has recently objected to callous uses of animals in so-called "research" efforts, as reported in the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* for Sept. 30, 1962:

> The Society said today it is not against legitimate use of animals in medical research. But it wondered whether legs of 400 dogs had to be crushed to learn about shock.
>
> It also questioned the need to grill live pigs over gasoline first in a study of serious burns.

Other cruel experiments are described in connection with hearings on a proposed law (discussed before a House Commerce subcom-

mittee) which would prevent inflicting avoidable pain on research animals. With all such efforts at ameliorative legislation, Theosophists must of necessity be sympathetic. It is well to know, also, that many biologists today discount the value of direct animal experiments, and favor other means of analytical study of animal behavior.

Humane Biology Projects

One new approach is embodied in a pamphlet prepared by the Animal Welfare Institute called "Humane Projects." This 41-page pamphlet (1960) puts emphasis on ecology and *observation* of animal behavior. Rachel Carson, author of the best-seller *The Sea Around Us,* writes the Preface. Mrs. Carson attempts to show why the observational approach is superior to the artificial, experimental one which leads to vivisection and infliction of cruelty:

> To understand biology is to understand that all life is linked to the earth from which it came; it is to understand [that] the stream of life . . . is in reality a unified force, though composed of an infinite number and variety of separate lives. The essence of life is lived in freedom. Any concept of biology is not only sterile and profitless, it is distorted and untrue if it puts its primary focus on unnatural conditions rather than on those vast forces not of man's making, that shape and channel the nature and direction of life. . . . It is essential that the beginning student should first become acquainted with the true meaning of his subject through observing the lives of creatures in their true relation to each other and to their environment.

Dynamic Models of Physiology and Behavior

A tool which has been developed by physicists promises to be of great help in studying organisms—especially those of higher intelligence (plants, animals, and people). The techniques of cybernetics, better known in this country today as computer techniques, are being used to model physiological systems as well as social and behavioral systems. The magazine *Behavioral Science,* published by the University of Michigan, contains many applications of computers to the study of behavior. Other technical magazines have shown how both analog and digital computers are being used in simulating physiological processes. A great deal remains to be done in these two fields, but the possibilities have been demonstrated. A Russian acknowledgement of this is contained in a translation from the Soviet magazine, *Problems of Cybernetics,* done in 1959. An article by S. N. Braynes, A. V. Napalkov, and V. B. Svechinskiy states:

> Techniques have recently been developed which permit the creation of dynamic models. Models of various physiological processes and phenomena can be created in modern cybernetic machines. The use of such models could play a major role in study of a whole series of problems in medicine and physiology. Active Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the U.S.S.R. V. V. Parin has noted the significance of this direction for the development of medical science.

Future Medical Research

It seems within the realm of possibility that future medical research will be largely analytical and only occasionally experimental. The power of computer simulation is almost limitless. If any system can be characterized by mathematical equations or by other types of logical description, its behavior and interactions can be simulated on computers. The equations can be complex, non-linear, and even not easily solvable; still, good approximations can be made to them on computers, which will give significant results. The old experimental approach of science is slowly giving way to the reasoned approach of the Einsteins of physics and mathematics. Abstract techniques replace purely material ones. In a sense the process represents the triumph of philosophy in a material world. Verification can be obtained by keen observation rather than by destructive experiment. We cannot pretend that this method is universally applicable as yet, but some day it may be used as a basic approach.

A Wary Eye on Blood Transfusions

The New York *Times* (Sept. 11, 1962) reported that "there are more deaths annually in the United States from blood transfusions than from appendicitis." Its authority for this statement was Dr. Max Simon of St. Francis Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., who said:

> The computed annual death rate from blood transfusions now exceeds that reported for many common surgical illnesses such as rectal cancer, appendicitis, or intestinal obstruction.
>
> He did not give comparative statistics for deaths from these conditions and from complications of blood transfusions. He did say, however, that reports from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare showed that the annual mortality from three major complications of blood transfusion was computed to be 16,500. The department's figures for 1961 list 1,890 deaths from appendicitis and 9,300 for hernia and intestinal obstruction. . . . Although indisputably lifesaving when they are really needed, transfusions can be a source of unnecessary hazard to the patient when they are given prophylactically, or just to "play it safe."